

**1973**  
**PETER OAKES EMBARKS UPON**  
**A REBUILD AT PIER STREET**  
**( Ref: 2018/16 )**



Although Dromana won the Premiership in **1971**, the following decade was problematic and a barren period for the club. As is well known in DFC's history, **John Booker** stepped down as the coach at the end of the 1972 season and the committee appointed **Peter Oakes** to the position.



**John Booker**

The inspirational and indefatigable **Eric Oakes** was the DFC President in that era; and he was most influential in attracting Peter Oakes to Pier Street. Peter is the son of **Frank Oakes** (Eric's brother). Frank Oakes had been a prominent figure **Bunyip** and **Warragul** football circles in earlier times.



**Eric Oakes**

As a teenager, Peter Oakes was an emerging star in **West Gippsland** football. In 1962 he trained with Collingwood and was selected in the **Collingwood FC Fourth XVIII** at the age of 15 years.

He then won selection in the **Magpies Under: 17 team** and made an immediate impact with his strong style of play and goal-kicking ability. In six games, Peter kicked 36 goals and won rapid promotion to the **Magpies Under: 19 team**. Peter played in the **VFL Third XVIII** team for the remainder of the 1962 season. He then played with the Magpies in the 1963 and 1964 seasons culminating in a Grand Final against Melbourne in 1964. Collingwood lost by 14 points that day.



**Victoria Park in earlier times.**

It might be noted that during this three year period, and at the start of the 1965 season, Peter Oakes hitchhiked to training at **Victoria Park** from **Warragul**. His parents would drive to **Dandenong** to pick him up after training

(sometimes not until 9pm at night). Peter was most dedicated in his ambition to play VFL football; and hitch-hiking was central to his 'game plan.'

Peter 'won his spurs' and a handsome reputation at **Victoria Park**; and in 1965 he was appointed **captain** of the **Collingwood Under: 19 team** for the first two games of that season.

With heavier work commitments in Warragul and the 'drain' of travelling (twice-weekly hitchhiking) to training at Victoria Park, Peter parted ways with Collingwood and played out 1965 season with **Warragul FC** in the **Latrobe Valley Football League**.

It is documented that Peter won a local football media award for his outstanding play with the '**Gulls**'; and there is no doubt that Collingwood FC had 'lost' a youngster of boundless potential.

Peter arrived at **Dromana FC** at the start of 1973 when the club's playing stocks were particularly low. Many readers will be surprised to know that in 1972 the club had suffered the ignominy of a 'players walk-out.'

It is recorded, in one reliable text, that sixteen members of the 1971 premiership team had decamped from Dromana leaving the playing stocks thin; or as Mrs. Hubbard had once discovered: "...the cupboard was bare."

My brother Frank however,  
was a good player with Bunyip  
before coaching at Warragul  
where he was a founder of the  
Warragul Youth Club and one  
of World Bantamweight  
Champion Lionel Rose's first  
trainers.

Frank's son, Peter, who had  
captained Collingwood Under  
19's, was later to coach  
Dromana

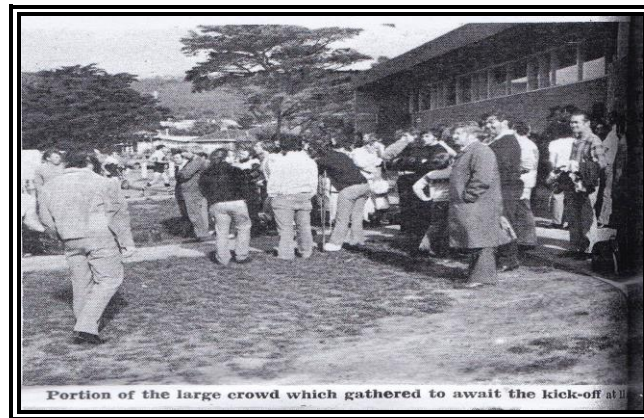
Source-DFNC Archives 1996  
The Oakes family connection at Dromana FC,

'Player walk-outs' in any sporting club are not only an embarrassment to the local club but are often the cause of acrimony and division throughout the town.

Although the history of DFC's implosion in 1972 has been 'lost in time', it is fair to suggest that the exodus, of so many experienced and talented players, had a long-term effect on the performance of the club in that era.

Disregarding the lack of match-hardened key players at DFC, Peter Oakes 'rolled up his sleeves' and set about to rebuild the club. He not only took on the role of **Senior XVIII** coach with gusto but he also coached the **Dromana Thirds** that season.

Peter Oakes' selfless struggles to reconstruct the club in 1973 did not go unnoticed by local supporters and his name is still held in the highest regard at DFC.



## **LIGHTNING PREMIERSHIP AT DROMANA**

Lightning Premiership at Pier Street in 1973.

In 1973, Dromana struggled valiantly to be competitive in the **Nepean Football League** but wins were 'few and far between.' In eighteen home and away fixtures, the club only enjoyed victory on three occasions.

One memorable win was against **Somerville**; and although the team list is unattainable and match details are very sketchy, a possible line-up for that game may have looked something like this:

<b>B:</b>	Phil Hogan	Atkinson	Robert Tonge
<b>HB:</b>	Doc Cameron	Rod Kerr	Pat Brewer
<b>C:</b>	Phil Marriott	Dave Williams	Robert Work
<b>HF:</b>	E. Tschappelir	Doug Ferguson	Ross Bailey
<b>F:</b>	Glenn Fyson	Ron Wilson	John Hogan
<b>R:</b>	Stephen Jolley	Peter Oakes	Ray Fyson.

As is often the case of teams faltering at the bottom of the ladder, newspapers match reviews were brief (sometimes not submitted); and, sadly (for history's sake), many aspects of that important victory were overlooked. However, it is known that the final scores that day were:

**Dromana 15.17. (107) defeated Somerville 12.14. (86).**

**Goalkickers for Dromana:** Steve Jolley 3, Ron Work 2, Glen Fyson 2, Ross Bailey 2, E. Tschappelir 2, Doug Ferguson, Peter Oakes, Ron Wilson, Rob Kerr

**Best players :** There were no details provided in the match report.



**Peter Oakes accepts the John Coleman Shield in 1973.  
In this photo, Peter is receiving the shield from  
former Essendon fullback Greg Brown.**



**Source: 'Warragul & Drouin Gazette' May 9<sup>th</sup> 2017  
Peter Oakes (third from the left ) and former  
teammates at Warragul FC Reunion in 2017.**



## FOOTNOTES REGARDING 1973 SEASON

1. In 1973 **Peter Oakes** won the club's **Best and Fairest** award. It was an historic achievement as the trophy was named that season in honor of the **Essendon's legendary forward John Coleman** who had died on the 5<sup>th</sup> April in 1973.

Best & Fairest Winner		
1962..... R Brindley	1973..... P Oakes	1984.....
1963..... A Matthews	1974..... J Hogan	1985.....
1964..... T Clay	1975..... L Booker	1986.....
1965..... T Clay	1976..... P Miller	1987.....
1966..... N Robinson	1977..... M Berwick	1988.....
1967..... R Eyson	1978..... L Edgerton	1989.....
1968..... S Jolley	1979..... R Thompson	1990.....

Source: DFNC records

2. The trophy was entitled the '**John Coleman Memorial Trophy**'; and it must have been a memorable moment when **Peter Oakes** was declared to be the **first-ever recipient** of the prestigious award.
3. The **DFNC's** association with **John Coleman** was brought about when John was the **Licensee of the Dromana Hotel** following his retirement from VFL football. It is known that, during his years in the township, **John Coleman** was an enthusiastic supporter of the Dromana Football Club.



The Legendary John Coleman

4. **John Coleman** died on **April 5<sup>th</sup> 1973** at the age of 44 years. He was at the **Dromana Hotel** when tragedy struck; and it documented that John died of coronary thrombosis (heart attack).



**The Dromana Hotel**

5. There will be some younger readers of this website who may not be fully aware of John Coleman's phenomenal record in AFL football. John was recruited to **Essendon** from **Hastings FC**; and in his first AFL match against **Hawthorn** he booted 12 goals. In that season, the '**rookie from Hastings**' booted 100 goals.
6. John became the most celebrated footballer in Australia until cruel injury cut him down. John's spectacular career came to a painful end when he dislocated his right knee on June 5<sup>th</sup> in 1954 (against **North Melbourne**) his career in AFL football was over. John had played **98 games and kicked 537 goals** at a phenomenal average of 5.47 goals per game.
7. An excellent reference regarding the life of John Coleman entitled '**The Great John Coleman**' was published by Nivar Press in 1997. **Victor Jeremiah**, the official historian of **Hastings Football Club**, is a co-author of the book.
8. **Peter Oakes** coached Dromana again in 1974; and in 1975 he was appointed the coach of **Chelsea Heights FC**. In 1980, following the stint at CHFC, he took on the coaching job at **Bena FC** ( now known as **Korumburra-Bena FNC Giants** )until the end of the 1982 season.
9. In all, Peter played some **460 games** of senior football until his 'swan song' at the **age of 39 years**. It was an incredible career and an indication of Peter's love of football and his resilience.





**Korumburra- Bena Football Club**

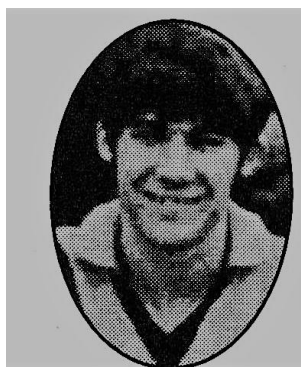
10. **John Hogan**, named in the forward pocket for Dromana that day, played only two seasons with Dromana (1973-74). He was highly regarded in local football; and in 1974 John won the club's **Best & Fairest** award. John was selected in the **'Team of the Decade' (1966-75)**.
11. **Stephen Jolley** was the best ruckman/ forward in Peninsula football during that era. Stephen, who played two senior AFL games with **Hawthorn**, made his AFL debut in **Round:13** against **Melbourne** at the **Glenferrie Oval** in 1970.
12. On the day that Stephen Jolley played his first AFL match, the Hawthorn team included such household names as: **Peter Hudson, Leigh Matthews, David Parkin, Leon Rice** and **Alan Martello**. The coach of the HFC was **John Kennedy**. Hawthorn won by 39 points; and it is recorded that Stephen had 5 kicks and 2 marks that day. On Stephen's return to DFC he became a lynch-pin in Peter Oakes' attempts to revive the club.
13. Stephen Jolley played 93 games with DFC and won two **Best and Fairest** trophies (1968 & 69). He was also selected at centre-half forward in the **Team of the Post War Era (1946-2015)**.



**Stephen Jolley**



14. **Ray Fyson**, one the finest rovers in club's history, won three club Best and Fairest awards (67-68-81). He played 208 senior games, was a member of the **1971 premiership team** and was selected in the **Team of the Post War era (1946 -2015)**. His brother, **Glenn** played 69 senior games and won the club's **Best and Fairest** award in the premiership season.



**Ray Fyson**

15. One of the youngest players that season was **Ross Bailey**. Ross won his spurs as a budding local star and went on to become one of the best midfielders in the club's history. Ross had exceptional skill, 'pace to burn' and did his best work in 'heavy traffic.' In that era, he was one of the 'DFC greats' and played until 1983. Ross amassed 108 senior games; and it came as no surprise that he was selected in the centre for the '**Team of the Decade 1976-1985.**'

16. **Dave Williams** was a tenacious midfielder in Peninsula football. Dave was gifted with speed and always exerted a 'physical presence' on the field. He served DFC from 1962- 1979; and, in all, played 115 senior games with DFC and won the **Club's Best & Fairest award** in 1972. Dave was named on the interchange bench in the **Team of the Post War Era (1946-2015)**. Dave's son **Tony** (105 senior games) and grandsons **Jai, Kai, Tyle and Cade** also play or have played with Dromana.



**Dave Williams**



**Doug Ferguson**

17. **Rod Kerr** (103 games), **Robert Work** (78 games), **Doug Ferguson** (17 games), **John Hogan** (32 games) and **Phil Marriot** (72 games) were other players from the 1971 list that returned to play for DFNC in 1973. The role that those members played in supporting Peter Oakes' attempts to rebuild the list was significant and should be recognized in that difficult chapter in DFNC's history.
18. In 1973 **Eric Oakes** was President and **Richard Fyson** was Secretary; and **Life Membership** was awarded to **Jack Cornish**.
19. In the Nepean FL Grand Final, **Crib Point** defeated the **Navy** by three points to win the **1973 NFL flag**.

#### **REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION:**

Sources: DFNC Records –Tiger Talk- DFNC Handbook-Personal files-information from the Oakes family- MPNFL history archives.

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